

Thursday, March 22, 2007



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Wednesday February 28, 2007

## Flanagan named to head new Ag Heritage Center in Mercer

**By ANN R. HARNEY**  
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HARRODSBURG - Virginia Flanagan has been named project manager for the Kentucky Agriculture Heritage Center.

The announcement came through Bruce Harper, the project's executive director whose last day on the job is today.

The center will be built on property on the east side of U.S. 127 North at the intersection with Mundays Landing Road. The land was donated to the project by industrialist, philanthropist and Mercer County native Ralph Anderson. It was part of and now is adjacent to Anderson Circle Farm.

Mercer County was chosen for the \$25 million center this summer, and the decision was announced at the Kentucky State Fair in August. The center is set to open in 2010, in time for the Equestrian Games at the Kentucky Horse Park.

In a press release, the center's board says Flanagan has extensive background in museum and project development. She served as director of the Campbellsville University Technology Training Center. Before that, she was director for the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort, and Harper said she worked on the economic center in Somerset.

"She is very capable," Harper said of Flanagan, whom he has known for more than 25 years. "She is smart and has a wealth of experience in projects like this one. I really feel comfortable with her coming in and taking over."

In the press release, he said, "I don't think we could find a better person anywhere that could take command of the project at this juncture."

For her part, Flanagan said, "I am looking forward to working with this exceptional board. ... I can see great potential for Kentucky, from a historical and economic perspective, with the development of this project."

Flanagan will begin work April 1.

Harper is going to work for Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer on Thursday. He will serve as liaison between the department and commodity groups and the General Assembly. Harper said several people have asked why he, a longtime loyal Democrat, is going to work for a Republican.

He has a ready answer. After spending most of his life in agriculture, he says, "I'm going to try to make Richie Farmer the best agriculture commissioner we've ever had, and I think he has the potential to be the best agriculture commissioner we've ever had."

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